FurryPhile

FurryPhile

FurryPhun for Everyone!!

Issue #1, June 1994

Supervising Publisher SilverFox

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: FurryPhile is sold on an issue by issue basis. Subscriptions are $13.00 per three issues. Single issues are available at cover price. Please inclusde $1.00 for S/H on single issues, or $3.00 for second-day delivery. Make checks/MO payable to Brian Miller or Annette Miller.

FurryPhile #1 is Copyright SilverFox Publications 1994. All material listed above is © of the respective artist or author. All other materials is © 1994 SilverFox. No material may be reprinted without permission, except for review with proper credit. Use no hooks. Try Vaseline, clears up the hairballs everytime! It takes two mice to screw in a lightbulb, but they've gotta be small!

NEXT ISSUE:

MORE "FREE TO RUN"! MORE "LOG OF THE WANDERING STAR"!! MORE OF YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS! YOUR LETTERS!! AND THE PREMIERE OF A NEW SERIES: "ALIEN DORM 6" BE HERE IN OCTOBER OR YOU'LL MISS OUT!! SEE YOU THEN!!!!!

From the Fox's Den:

(A few editorial notes and comments, moans, gripes, asstd stuff....)

Greetings!! Welcome to FurryPhile number one, SilverFox Publications premiere issue of FurryPhun for Everyone!© I am SilverFox, (although my friends on the AOL net know me as Sylverfox) and would like to take this editorial time in this issue to extend some thank you's to a lot of deserving people who helped us in both hard sweat and inspiration for FurryPhile #1!!

First and foremost, I'd like to thank **Dave Dace** and **Pat Rogers, Jr,** of Toon-A-Tics Studios for their fine rendering of "Might Have Beens", our cover piece. Truly beautiful work, guys!!

Next, **Brian Miller**, the human host of operations (since an anthrofox would get a lot of stares walking down the street), for his assistance and contributions of art and text.

On to **Annette Miller**, for her story, "Mice or Men?", **Molly Kreuzer** (a newcomer to the Furworld) for "Who is your Real Enemy?", and **Alexxander Foxx** (a worthy name if there ever was one), for "The Hunter". Excellent work everyone, two paws up!!

Our artist contributors, **Ed Dyer, Gary Akins, Scot Masters,** and **Alexxander Foxx**, get a HUGE round of applause for all coming through at the last minute!!

Our Comic artist, **London,** gets multiple yips for his fine work on "Free to Run". Thanks Big L (the huge cash settlement is in the mail!)

Other kudos go to **Mark Freid**, for both his extraordinary artwork, and the list of BBS he generously donated and researched (be sure to call his, *THE WATER TOWER, 1-818-222-9573;* tell him Sylver sent you!!)

Plus all the people that have had enough faith in us to keep us going over the past two years as we set up to run including:

Shadowfox BBS, who gave us a lot of inspiration

YARF! the Journal of Applied Anthropomorphics (a great sister publication)

Shon, Ben, and the rest of the zany crew at Antarctic Press (buy lots of their stuff because of this plug, okay?!)

The Furryland gang from AmericaOnLine (sylverfox@aol.com)

and a score of others!!!!

Since this is our first issue, we'd like to get some feedback from you (even submissions even!!). Feel free to write us for our letters column, "Hounds at the Door!" and we'll be glad to print your letters in upcoming issues. Our address is on the back cover, in the submission policy, or you can e-mail us at: **sylverfox@aol.com**. I answer all the mail personally, and enjoy hearing from my ~~adoring loyal slavering interested~~ public fans and fellow Furries. See you in October, for our grand second issue. (Our Christmas special!) Yip at ya soon!!

SilverFox

MAKK SUCKS!
HARDCORE
4-20-94

The Hunter

The night was dark as Joe McCarthy sat adjusting the telescopic sight of his rifle. Joe was a hunter, a tall, stocky man, who had spent most of his life in the bush, safari guide, mercenary, hunter. Some said he was the best there was. "Nothing Joe McCarthy sets his sight on gets away!" his friends said.

On this foggy night, Joe sat in utter darkness, the silent woods around him his only companion. Joe knew his weapons in the dark; he was a commensurate professional. The fog that was forming would both help and hinder him. His quarry: a fierce animal, prowling the countryside around his home. A free tigress, dangerous as it had no fear of man. Joe was the only man brave and skilled enough to hunt it.

His watch beeped. Joe looked down. 0210 local time. Time to start the hunt.

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0410, local time. Joe had been tracking for two hours. In that time, he'd heard the call of the tigress at least twice. It was not near any habitation, so Joe felt no urgency. He would track it until Hell froze over if necessary. It was a matter of honor.

0425, local time. Joe found the tracks of the tigress. It was cunning alright. The beast had taken to solid rock to avoid leaving tracks. It didn't realize that the damp of the fog was Joe's ally. Her prints glistened on the darkness of the rock like a neon bulb to Joe's highly trained night sight. The only thing he didn't know was how far behind the creature he was. It could be right around the next bend, or twenty miles away. It made him even more cautious.

0512, local time. Joe crept around a dead tree, fallen at an angle over the faint path he followed and saw her. "God, she's huge!" Joe thought, as the tigress drank from the stream in front of her. He marveled for a moment at the beauty of the white striped creature in front of him. Then, it was simply a matter of raising his rifle to his shoulder, sighting in and....

Some form of instinct in the tigress warned her. She threw herself into the stream, as Joe's shot rang out. It went over top of her, missing by inches as she splashed off down stream.

"Damn!"

He returned to tracking her, listening as the splashing got farther and farther away.

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0638, local time. It had taken Joe over an hour to catch back up to his quarry. The sun might have been trying to come out, but the morning fog, and a light rain kept a dark and murky oppression around him as he trailed the faint traces of her spoor.

With an almost inhuman grace, Joe approached the edge of a clearing. His booted feet made very little noise as he spied the tigress again. It appeared to be resting, exhausted from its running. Joe was not in the best of shape himself, but he was well accustomed to it. He once tracked a bull elephant for two full days straight without stopping. This little bit of time was hardly even an inconvenience.

The tigress was sleeping, ears alert for any trouble. It hadn't lived this long without caution. Joe almost hated to shoot it. He loaded the second of his four shots into the breech of the rifle. Joe treated every hunt as a challenge. He carried only four shots, one of which had already been used. The second was sure to be the deciding shot. Joe knelt, raising the rifle to his shoulder for his second shot.

As he knelt, Joe heard a loud CRACK. His knee had hit a dry stick underneath the leaves, causing it to break with a loud noise. The tigress leapt to her feet, ears zeroing in on the sound. As Joe tightened on the trigger, sight directly on the chest of the beast, it tensed. The tigress leaped, just as the shot rang out.. It didn't seem to slow at all. Another miss!

"Damn!"

Joe wearily rose to his feet, entering the clearing to pick up the trail again.

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0814, local time. Joe was certain that he had missed on the last shot. The tigress had made good time away from the clearing, and was now well aware that she was being stalked. That changed the picture for Joe McCarthy. He knew that the next time he found her, it could be the hunter who became the prey. He'd been in that situation before; he did not like it.

Caution slowed Joe, his senses expanded to the maximum. He knew that she was near. There was no sound, or smell, or visual confirmation of it; Joe just knew. He'd been playing the game too long to miss the signs. He pulled his rifle off the sling, working the slide to chamber his third round. It was then that he heard the sound.

With a snarl, the tigress sprang from the tree above Joe. He estimated at least twenty feet up based on her impact. The thing was, Joe wasn't there when she hit. His reflexes, honed to the highest ideal of human perfection, pushed him to the left as she fell, rolling out to his knees.

The tigress regained her feet instantly, panting from the impact on the ground. She circled, staring at Joe. He could see death in her eyes, the inner light flashing through the green. Joe hesitated, the beauty of the creature almost halting him. The professional hunter in him won out. He raised the rifle to his shoulder, finding the crease of his arm. His eye went to the eyepiece. He waited for the tigress to charge.

He didn't have to wait long. The tigress had seen enough hunters that she knew what that thing he held was. Instead of going meekly to her doom, she charged. "Always predictable," Joe thought. He waited until she was roughly five feet in front of him and fired. The muzzle spat. Joe looked. The tigress was nowhere to be seen. He heard crashing in the underbrush behind him. As he fired, the tigress had sprung over him, without attacking. It was now rapidly departing through the woods.

"Damn!!"

Joe sprang to his feet, tearing after her, all attempts at stealth rejected in a futile effort to catch the fleeing creature.

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0901, local time. Joe was exhausted. He'd been running almost nonstop since he'd left the last encounter. It was time to put an end to this farce. It was time to finish her off.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes. Joe trailed, hearing her closer and closer. He knew the end was near. It came with an abrupt suddenness. He burst into a clearing, and there she stood. Her ribs were shaking with her panting, the tiredness plain on her face. For almost a minute, they remained frozen in place.

The tigress was the first to break the spell. She sat, her head hanging, as if she knew that this was the end. Her tongue lolled out, panting in exhaustion. Joe didn't think it would end like this. He didn't want a sacrifice; that was not the hunter's way. But in this case, the objective was too great to risk on sentimentality.

Joe sat down on a rock, never taking his eyes off the tigress. They watched each other, knowing what was to come. Joe waited, willing his breathing to slow. He only had one shot left; it had to count.

Gently, he eased the rifle out off his shoulder. Slowly he raised it to his eye, resting it there. He could see the tigress, though the fog and rain, just sitting there waiting. The distance was about two hundred yards. There was no way for him to miss at this range. He sat and waited.

His finger didn't want to tighten on the trigger. Joe had to admit it; the tigress was beautiful in her own way. She was a dangerous and deadly beauty, a wild thing that had stepped over the line. That's why Joe was here. It was a matter of honor.

He lowered the rifle for a moment and looked at her. "I'm sorry, beautiful. It had to be one of us or the other." He raised the rifle again, sighting directly in on her head. He figured it would be less painful that way.

The tigress did nothing but stare at him. Her eyes held his in the scope as he stopped his breathing. His finger tightened with an imperceptible slowness until he felt it hit the point of no return. The rifle spoke, a loud report in the silence of the glade, and Joe watched the tiger crumple. He couldn't see her head, but knew without a trace of uncertainty that he'd been successful. He didn't look again; he knew that the person he made his report to would take him at his word.

Tiredly, Joe dragged himself toward home. It had to be at least ten miles by his reckoning, a healthy walk after the night's exertion. Silently, he bid good-bye and began walking, slinging his rifle behind him.

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1154. local time. Joe arrived home, dead tired. He set his rifle on the porch, and unlaced his boots. Dragging his weary body inside, he headed for the bedroom.

Inside the bedroom, he heard her voice as he set the rifle down. "Hey, Joe!" He turned and saw her. "You missed!" The tigress was sitting, having a cup of coffee, eyeing him. "Well, Kanitha? How'd you do it?" He stared at his wife, the tigermorph. "How'd I miss that last shot?" He was too tired to listen to her gloat.

"Simple. I reset your sights, the one thing you can't fix in the dark!" She got up, stretching her furry body as she walked over to the bed. "You know what this means, Joe!" She stretched out next to him, as tired as her human husband. "You have to do the dishes for an entire month!!"

"DAMN!!"Φ

A sample from "The Epic"

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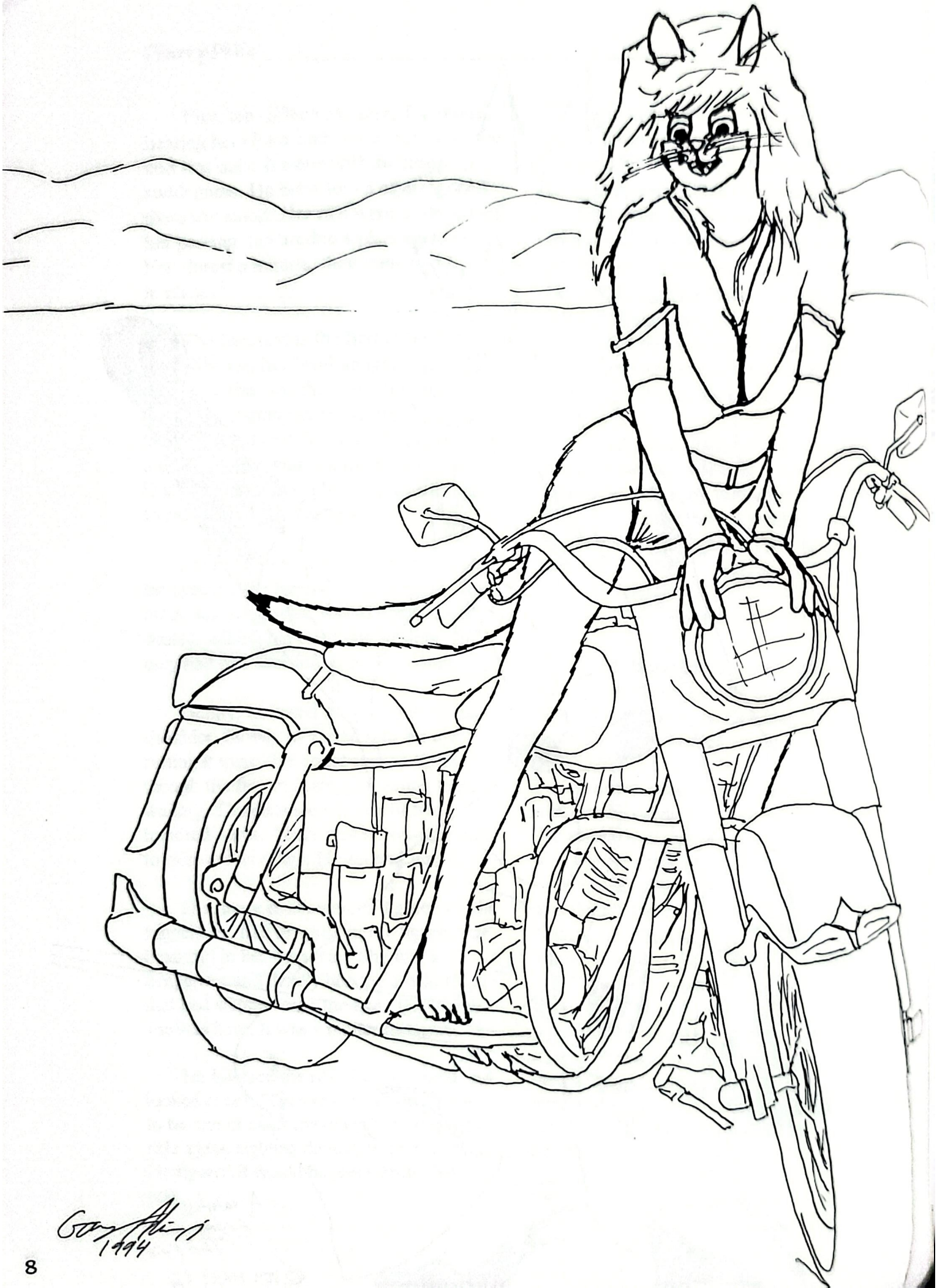

1994

Ch'Chirra (Rielle female)

WHO IS YOUR REAL ENEMY?

BY MOLLY KREUZER

The Shr'zzan village of Biratt was in chaos. Huts burned and bodies littered the ground. Frantic groups of villagers rushed from one to the other trying to stop the flames. Others moved through the destruction tending to the wounded and mourning the dead. The glow from fires and funeral pyres lit the night sky with a false daylight.

A young woman stood alone in front of one of the pyres, watching the flames leap skyward.

"Farewell, little brother, and rest with honor." Riksa whispered, tossing as small bundle of wildflowers into the fire. Her brother Keth had been killed during the Kodarii raid. She had been hunting when she had seen the smoke and had been too late to save him or the village. All she had left now was a medallion and memories of a brother had died too young. Riksa looked at the gold medallion in her hand and studied the lion's head engraved on it for a moment. She had bought it for him on a trip to another Shr'zzan village. Suddenly she realized just how alone she was going to be - Keth had been the only family she had left. A shrill howl of grief escaped her throat and echoed in the darkness surrounding her. As the fire continued to burn, Riksa stared into its heart, sinking into an empty despair.

"Riksa-mrri Yrrhin, I must speak with you." Riksa turned quickly at the sharp command. Miryr, pride mother of the village of Biratt, stood glaring angrily at her. Miryr's fur shown like gold in the firelight and her amber eyes glowed like flames.

"Yes, Pride Mother." Riksa straightened bowed her head in the customary acknowledgment.
"Good. Much better." The pride mother's tone was gentler, but her long tail still twitched agitatedly. "I know you have lost your brother, but I need you to be strong. Your skill is needed. The Kodarii are still within our territory. I can still sense them.."

Riksa's ears flattened and she gave an angry hiss. "Can you tell where they are?" The thought of revenge brought a fierce light to Riksa's eyes.

"To the east, my child. I think they will try to attack Triz'll next. It is the closest village to ours in that direction. You are one of the best trackers in the village. Trail them and make sure they leave our territory. If they don't, try to warn Triz'll in time. Tell Pride Mother Urona that I sent you."

Riksa's lips parted in a grim smile, revealing sharply pointed teeth and delicate fangs. "I will make certain they don't attack another village. With your permission, I will gather my things."

"The sooner the better. They only have a hour's start on you. Be careful, though, " the pride mother warned. "Don't let the need for vengeance cause you to make foolish mistakes. May the Goddess protect you."

"Don't worry, Pride Mother, I won't let my anger blind me." Riksa slipped her brother's medallion on over her head. "But I will do my best to honor Keth."

* *

Jherad Tannelorn sat staring at his campfire, reminding himself for the thousandth time that his own stupidity had landed him out here in the middle of decidedly unfriendly territory. He should have known better than to call King Deltris an idiot. At the time, however, the description had seemed to fit. He had just returned from a failed raid against Kodar. Someone had obviously warned the Kodarii. He and his men had walked into an ambush before they even reached the border. He had barely managed to get away alive with a handful of troops. Because the raid had been planned with a great deal of secrecy, Jherad believed that the only way the Kodarii could have gotten the information was from someone well placed in the palace. When he told the king this, Deltris refused to see beyond the end of his royal nose and acknowledge that there was a spy in his court. He should have known better. His outburst over the situation had earned him the task of carrying out the king's latest plan for dealing with the Kodarii: trying to form an alliance with the Shr'zzan.

Jherad had to admit that the plan had some merit. If humans and Shr'zzan could reach an agreement to work together, both sides would have better chances against the increasing attacks by the Kodarii. By combining their information and working together to guard the border areas, the two forces would be able to prevent the raids against human and Shr'zzan settlements.

It all sounded good, but first he had to avoid the Kodarii and convince the Shr'zzan that the proposition was legitimate. That wasn't going to be an easy task, considering the Shr'zzan weren't known for trusting humans. They were loners and didn't encourage visitors. In fact, it had been many years since the last contact between humans and Shr'zzan. Jherad figured he would be lucky to make it back into Aeridor and home to Balamere alive.

* *

Riksa had been following the Kodarii for several days now. It hadn't taken her long to catch up to the slower moving raiding party. Trailing them closely, she had even been able to take out several Kodarii who had been foolish enough to become separated from the rest. They had continued east until a day ago, when a messenger bird had flown into their camp. They had quickly broken camp and headed west. Whatever had been in the message they had received had changed their plans. Riksa knew that the border between the Shr'zzan and human lands was in the direction that they were headed. She began to worry that the Kodarii planned to make a raid on a human settlement and see that the Shr'zzan were blamed for it. Open fighting between Shr'zzan and humans would give the Kodarii the opportunity they needed to take control of even more land. Riksa knew she had to stop them before they were able to carry out whatever it was they had been ordered to do. All she could do was follow and wait for the Kodarii to make their move.

Now she sat perched in the branches of a tree, waiting for the Kodarii to pass along the trail beneath her. Her tail twitched nervously as she crouched down deeper into the cover of the tree. She could hear the Kodarii coming up the trail on her left. Stupid green-skinned fools, she thought, they make so much noise that they could be heard for miles. Then her keen ears picked up a noise in the opposite direction.

At the same time, two Kodarii scouts entered the small clearing in front of her perch. Riksa tensed, forcing every muscle in her body to keep still. Goddess help me if they're meeting reinforcements, she thought. Suddenly, the Kodarii stopped and slipped into the dense underbrush beside the trail. One was now in a thicket just below her. Riksa realized now what they were doing - setting an ambush. And the noise to her right was still coming closer, walking straight into the Kodarii trap. She quietly loosened her sword in its sheath.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Jherad entered a small clearing on the trail, checking all around him for any sign of either the Kodarii or the Shr'zzan. This deep into Shr'zzan territory, he didn't want any surprises, and something didn't feel quite right. He moved toward the center of the clearing, drawing his sword. Suddenly two Kodarii came at him from out of nowhere, shouting battle cries. Jherad managed to dodge the first one to reach him, but took a cut across the arm from the sword of the second one. Dropping back, he got his footing as the first Kodarii charging at him. He parried the attack, then came under the Kodarii's guard and sliced his belly. He didn't see the second Kodarii coming up behind him until it was almost too late. He pivoted and blocked the attack, but lost his footing and slipped, dropping his sword. His opponent lunged at him. Suddenly, there was a scream that made the hair on the back of Jherad's neck stand on end. Jherad's attacker abruptly stopped, turning toward the sound. Someone leaped out of a tree, landing directly behind the two fighters. With one quick move, the unknown warrior struck with one clawed hand and drove a sword into the Kodarii with the other. Jherad stayed on the ground for a moment, stunned. The other warrior was a surprisingly attractive female Shr'zzan, with long dark hair. Her fur was a pale cream color that turned to dark brown mask on her face. Her ears, tail, and what he could see of her hands were the same dark brown. A streak of white ran through the front of her hair, and one eye was blue and the other green. She wore black leather armor covered with metal studs. He stared as she picked up his sword and handed it to him.

"My name is Jherad Tannelorn, and I have no desire to fight you, " Jherad said as he took the sword and got to his feet.

"Good, my name is Riksa and we've got to get out of here. Follow me."

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Riksa could still not believe that a human had come so far into Shr'zzan land. She led him back into the dense wood to hide in the heavy underbrush. Almost immediately the area was swarming with the rest of the Kodarii war party. Riksa bandaged the man's arm while they waited in silence. Finally night set in and the Kodarii gave up their search. Riksa motioned to the man to move out.

For a while, they traveled in without speaking. Riksa studied her companion. He was tall, with black hair and dark eyes. He had the lean, hard body of a seasoned warrior, and strong face. She even supposed he was handsome, for a hairless human. It was his eyes that intrigued her most. There was a hardness and a sadness there that told her he had seen too much pain and death. Finally he broke the silence.

"Where are we headed?"

"To my village, Biratt," Riksa growled, "We will decide your fate there."

"Can you take me to the Council of Elders?," Jherad asked.

Riksa stopped for a moment, shocked by his request. "You want to speak to the Council? You'll be lucky if Pride Mother Miryr and Biratt's elders let you live!"

Jherad gave her a hard look. "Then why did you save me?"

Riksa shrugged wearily. "You were obviously important to the Kodarii. They set an ambush for you. Besides, I couldn't the Kodarii kill anyone, even a human."

"They knew I was there?" Jherad stopped, stunned.

"Yes. This group had raided my village. I was following them when they received a message by bird and suddenly took off in another direction. They stopped here and set up the ambush you walked into."

"Damn! There must be someone sending the Kodarii information." Jherad could feel the anger making a knot in his belly. "No one beside the King and his Council knew I was out here."

Riksa was curious now. "What exactly are you doing in Shr'zzan territory?"

"Trying to get an agreement to work together to stop the Kodarii. King Deltris of Aeridor sent me to negotiate with your people, hoping that by cooperating with each other we can put an end to the raids. "

"Do you think it will work?" Their was skepticism in Riksa' voice.

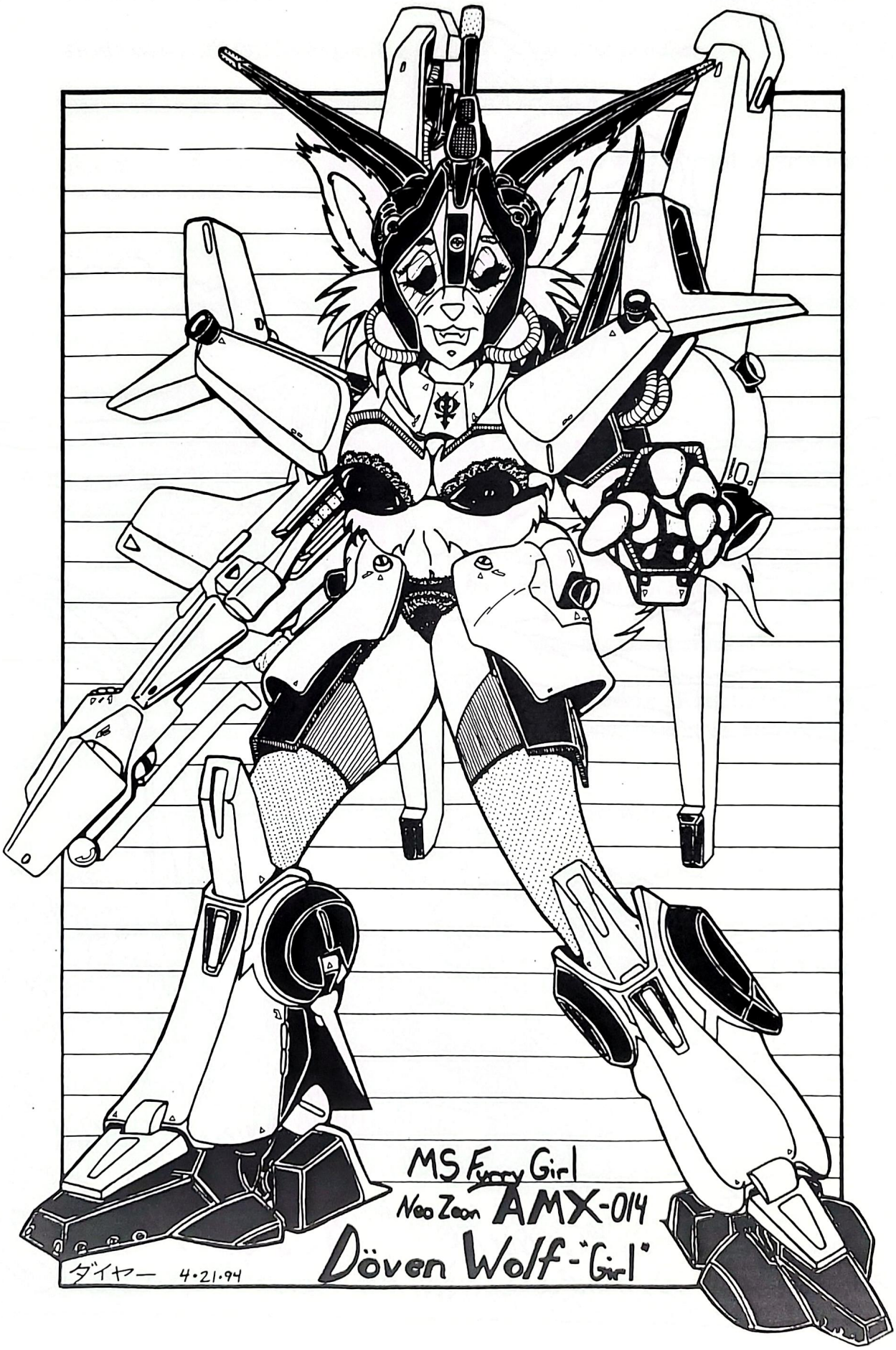
"I hope so.," Jherad sighed wearily. "I've lost too many friends to the fighting."

Riksa thought about her brother Keth. "I have lost loved ones, too. We'll talk to Pride Mother Miryr. She can arrange for you to meet with the Council."

"Thank you, Riksa. That's all ask.. I hope I can convince them that the idea will work."

"I hope so, too," murmured Riksa, "For both our people's sakes."

With that, the two warriors continued toward Biratt.


MS Furry Girl
Neo Zeon AMX-014
Döven Wolf - "Girl"
ダイヤー 4・21・94

FREE TO RUN

by London

Dear Readers.....

The story you are about to experience is from a long line of tales spurring from one great story called "The Epic of Androy" Its' full title is "Banshee, Seed of Kerahoutae" or "Free To Run" (which we shall call it for now).

If the art seems a bit crude at first, it is because I had to create and develop these characters virtually overnight. It will be improving steadily, I promise you.....

If interest grows, I may bring you "Free to Run"'s parent story (a sample of which is included in this issue and in SilverFox' s mature magazine "Furrottica"). For now, we here at Have-A-Day Studios and SilverFox Publications are proud to present the first (and unfortunatly, short!) installment of "Free to Run".

We hope you enjoy this story. If you do, drop a line to the letters column of either magazine, "Hounds at the Door!" and let us know what you think.

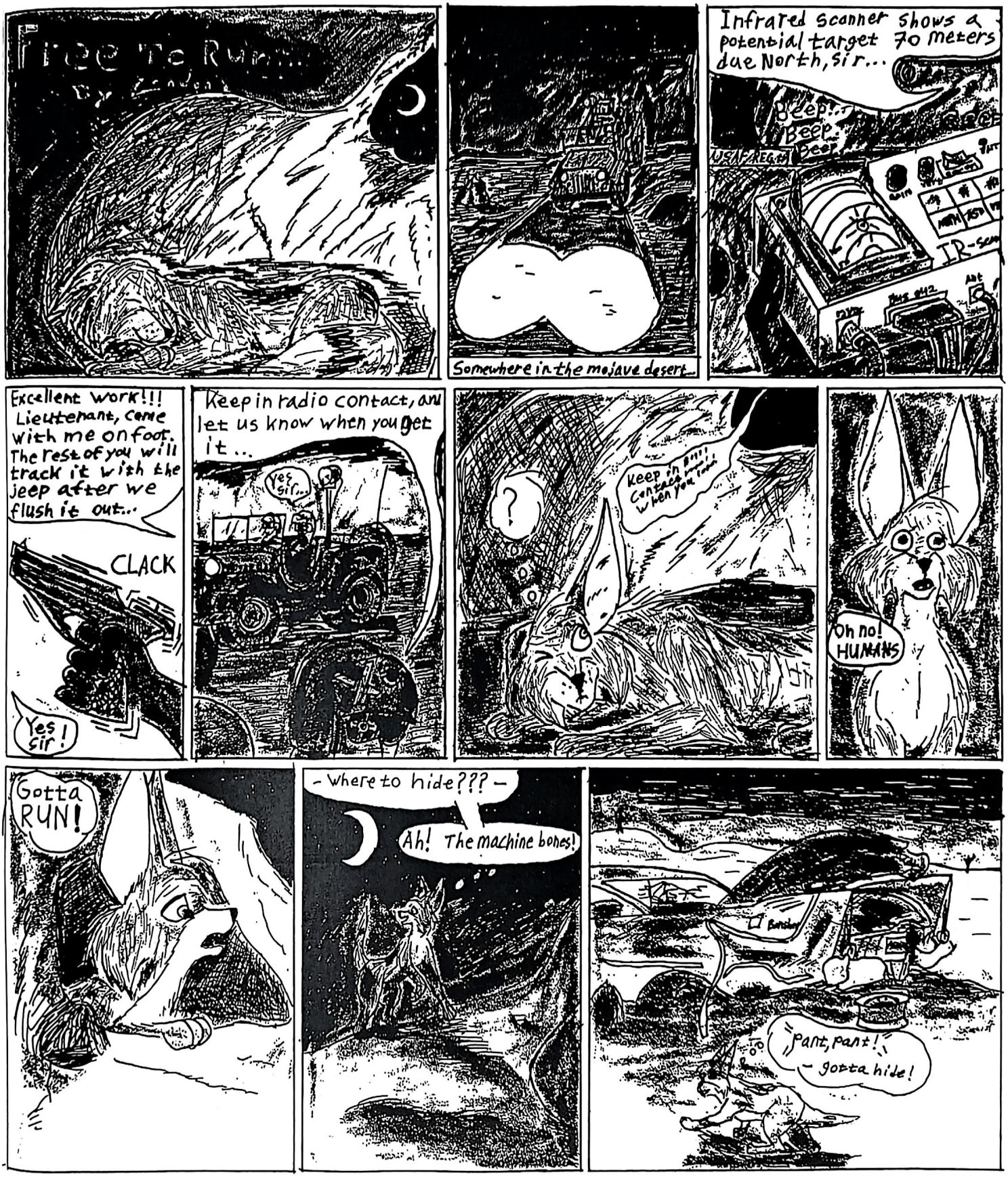
Sincerly,

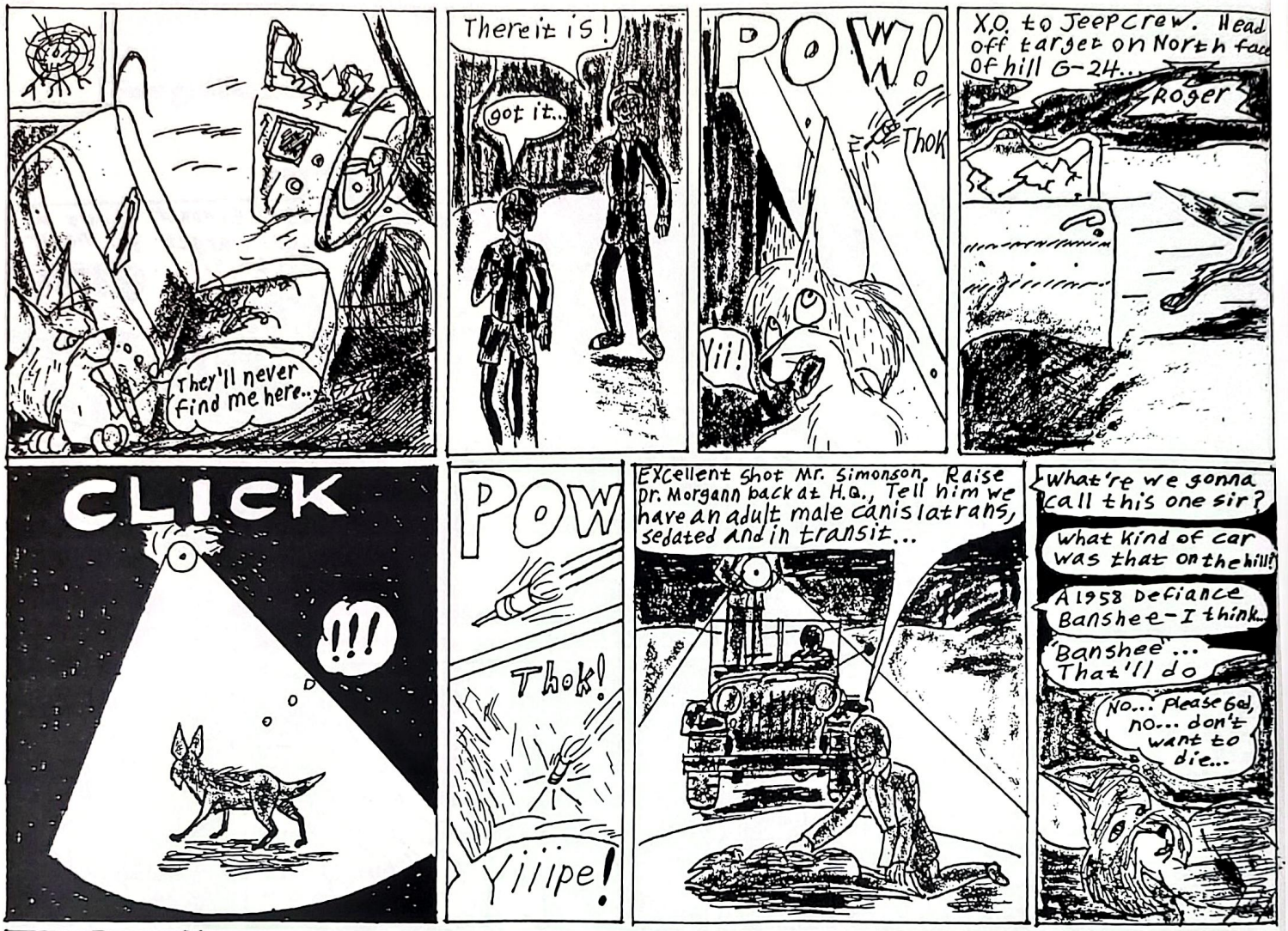
London

PS. As an artist, I wish to say that the mild nudity in this story is NOT intended to offend anyone. It should be taken in the context it was created in: that the body is a beautiful thing of nature (or of God, if you believe as I do) as is love for another being (and sex, too), and they should be interpreted as such.....

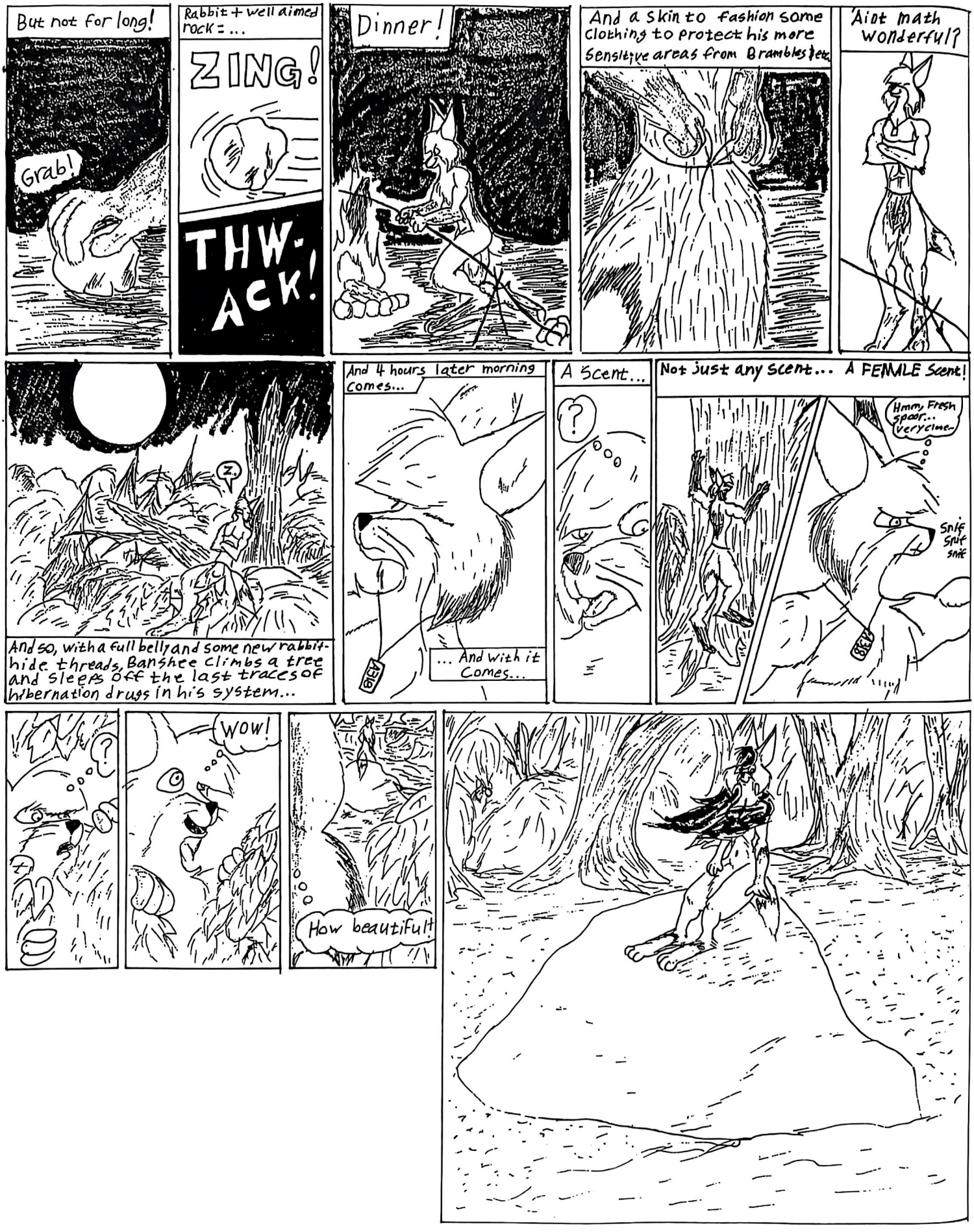
So now, on with the show!!!

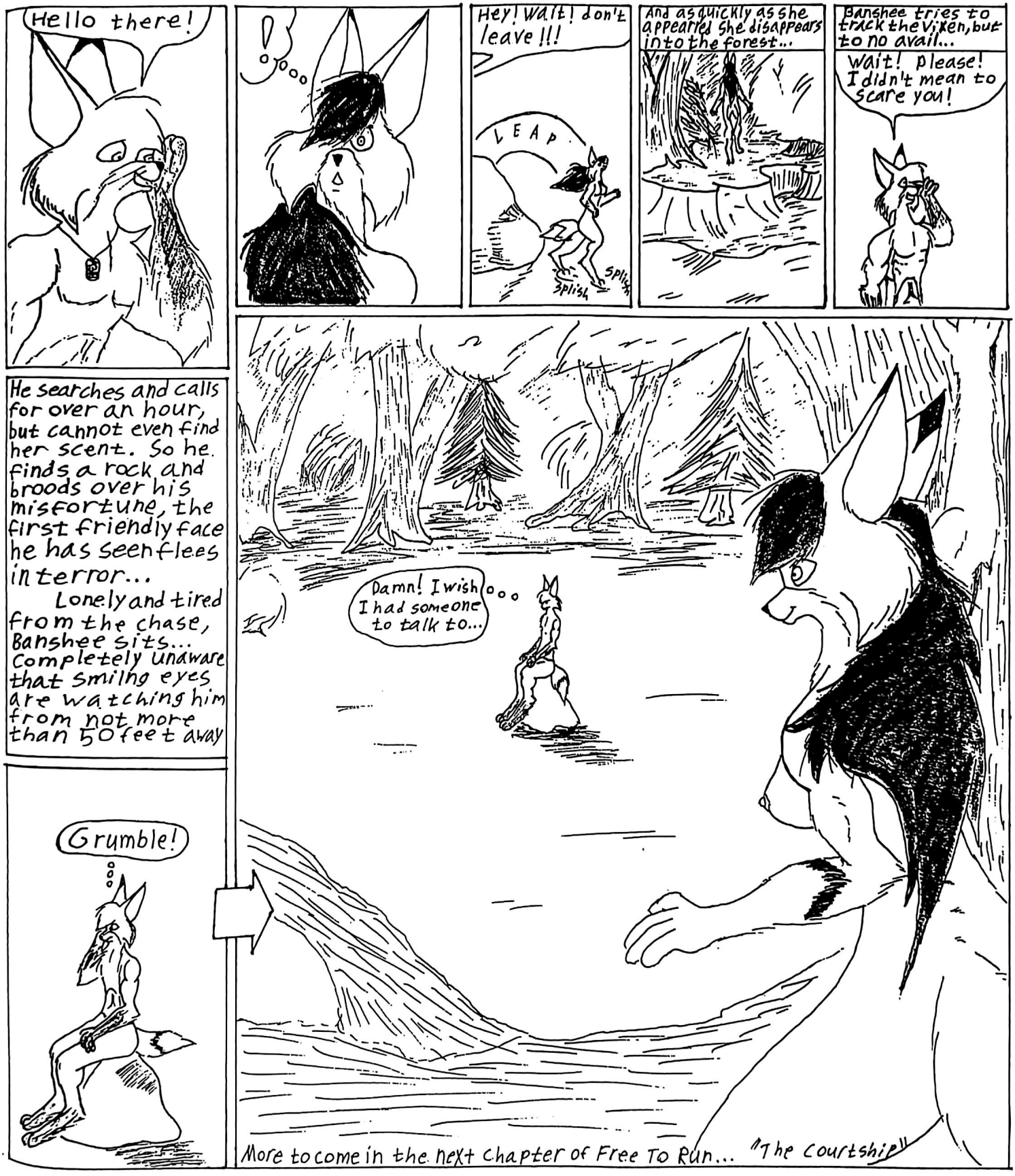
(EDITOR'S NOTE: *We here at SilverFox concur with this, as stated in our editorials and submission policies. If you are offended, don't buy it. As a free people, I find the concept of censorship intollorable, and therefore, with some very few excepdons, do not practice it. So there.)*

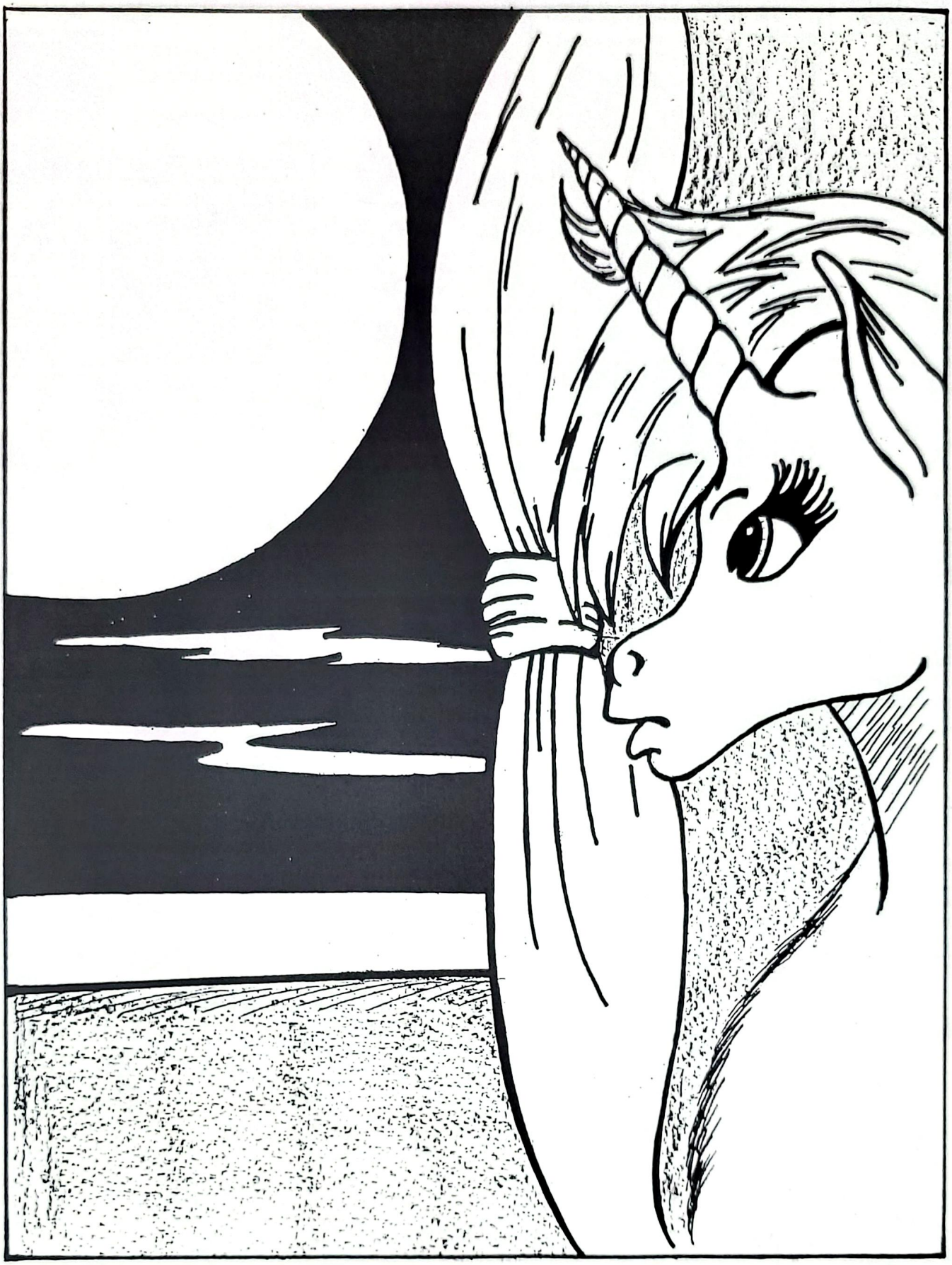

Free To Run...
Somewhere in the mojave desert...
Infrared scanner shows a potential target 70 meters due North, sir...
Beep... Beep... Beep...
Excellent work!!! Lieutenant, come with me on foot. The rest of you will track it with the jeep after we flush it out...
CLACK
Yes! sir!
Keep in radio contact, and let us know when you get it...
Yes, sir...
Keep in radio contact, and let us know when you get it...
?
Oh no! HUMANS
Gotta RUN!
- where to hide??? -
Ah! The machine bones!
Pant, pant! - gotta hide!


They'll never find me here...
There it is!
got it...
POW!
Thok
Yii!
X.O. to Jeep crew. Head off target on North face of hill G-24..
Roger
CLICK
!!!
POW
Thok!
Yiiipe!
Excellent shot Mr. Simonson. Raise Dr. Morgann back at H.Q., Tell him we have an adult male canis latrans, sedated and in transit...
What're we gonna call this one sir?
What kind of car was that on the hill?
A 1958 Defiance Banshee - I think..
'Banshee'... That'll do
No... Please God, no... don't want to die...
No...
Project 717 - A14 - "Animal warfare". A governmental T.V. program provided for the masses to quench their thirst for violence. The ad's said it was completely computer generated. Little did the well-controlled citizens of 2140 AD. realize that they were watching the newest type of real-life war machines in action, evolved animals...
A318
STATUS: Green
And little did the all-powerful world government know, serial # A318 or "Banshee" as he was called by the scientists who created him, was about to throw a monkey wrench into the very works of their dominion. Now more human than coyote, but still as untameable as ever, he was ready for his release into "The Dome"...

4 months later...
His new body still wet with frost from cryogenic stasis, Banshee finally begins to stir...
Ooh- my head...
Oh My GOD! What happened to my PAWS?
After vacating the small tree hollow he found himself in, he sits and tries to put things in perspective...
Sigh... Okay... I'm here, now what?
What the hell happened to me? Where am I?
Erh? what's this?
"Banshee..." that's my NAME... waitaminit- how do I know that?
BANSHEE
Banshee puzzles over the strange faint memories triggered by the sight of the simple metal tag around his neck, and the huge mass of previously unknown information in his head. From whence it came he does not know... Odd things- human speech simple tools. and other strangeness...
And since he is unable to solve the enigma of their origins...
He turns his attention to the immidiate & more familiar tasks of hunger and survival... After all, First things first...
Game presents itself...
But it soon becomes apparent...
Yarrrgh!
That the old ways of doing things don't work as well as they used to...
Whump
OOF...
Score: Rabbits 1 Banshee 0


But not for long!
Grab!
Rabbit + well aimed rock = ...
ZING!
THW-ACK!
Dinner!
And a skin to fashion some clothing to protect his more sensitive areas from Brambles etc.
'Aint math wonderful?
Z
And so, with a full belly and some new rabbit-hide threads, Banshee climbs a tree and sleeps off the last traces of hibernation drugs in his system...
And 4 hours later morning comes...
... And with it Comes...
A Scent...
?
Not just any scent... A FEMALE Scent!
Hmm, Fresh spoor... very fine.
Snif Snif Snif
?
WOW!
How beautiful!


Hello there!
!
Hey! Wait! don't leave !!!
LEAP
Splish Splish
And as quickly as she appeared she disappears into the forest...
Banshee tries to track the Viken, but to no avail...
Wait! Please! I didn't mean to scare you!
He searches and calls for over an hour, but cannot even find her scent. So he finds a rock and broods over his misfortune, the first friendly face he has seen flees in terror...
Lonely and tired from the chase, Banshee sits... Completely unaware that smiling eyes are watching him from not more than 50 feet away
Damn! I wish I had someone to talk to...
Grumble!
More to come in the next chapter of Free To Run... "The Courtship"



Tribute to Vicky

This sketch of the Princess (Princess © Vicky Wyman) is a tribute to a lady who has brought much joy to us through the land of Xanadu, its' Everchanging Palace, and its' myriad, wonderful inhabitants.

Gary Allen
1993

MICE OR MEN?

By Annette Miller

When Caldex arrived home, he immediatly knew something was wrong. The house was dark and the air felt electric, more than a trifle foreboding. His nose twitched involuntarily, and his eyes darted about, watching everything. Marid, his wife, was supposed to be home, working in her lab. He had called before leaving the office, not more than twenty minutes ago. Everything had been fine then.

He began walking closer to the house, the fur on the back of his neck rising involuntarily with each step. His ears strained to pick up any sound, but all was silence. His tail flipped about uncontrollably, as if sensing danger all around. Caldex wanted to rush inside and shout Marid's name, but an unseen force restrained him.

He reached the front porch, his keys making loud jingling noises as they shook in his trembling paw. They fell from his grasp as he tried to unlock the front door. As Caldex leaned over to pick up the errent keys, his shoulder bumped the door. It swung open with a soft creak.

Nothing looked disturbed, but his sensitive mouse nose detected a faint trace of smoke. He reached over and turned on a lamp, but nothing happened. Caldex looked over the top of the lampshade and could faintly discern that the bulb had exploded.

"Marid!" he said softly and ran for the back of the house, where the lab was located. The door was shut and the odor of smoke was stronger than ever. "Marid!!" Caldex screamed and threw himself at the door.

The door gave way with a loud bang making his large black eyes stream with tears and his nose burn. There was an acrid stench to it that left a horrible taste in his mouth. Caldex fell back momentarily, coughing, but hurried forth again in an effort to reach his wife.

His ears twitched when he heard a groan coming from behind one of the counters. He made his way over in that direction and saw a paw move slightly. He reached to grab it and stopped short. This was not the paw of his wife. Instead of the four fingers that mice normally have, there were five. There was no rough, leathery feel to it. It was soft and fleshy. He looked up the arm and saw what he'd feared most. Marid's beautiful white fur had disappeared, leaving only the soft pink

skin underneath. Caldex steeled himself, grabbed the arm, and pulled her to safety.

When Marid awoke, she saw Cal sitting next to her on the sofa. She sat up, and covering her eyes, cried softly. Caldex slipped his arm around her, grimacing inwardly.

"My God, Cal!! Look at me! I'm....I'm.....HUMAN!! What have I done?! Dear Lord, what have I DONE?!!!" She looked at him, her eyes shining with tears. Caldex noticed they haden't changed like the rest of her. They were still large and their normal, beautiful sapphire blue.

"What happened?" he asked gently.

"I don't know! I was working on my theory again."

"You don't mean the one...." he started.

"Yes, the one that's been called heretical, and has gotten me kicked out of every decent research organization in the country. I had just finished merging two DNA string structures when there was this horrible explosion. Some of my chemical compounds must have caught and gone up too." She stood up and paced for a moment. Marid reached out and grabbed the blanket off the back of the couch, smiling at Cal.

"It's a little chilly. I'm not used to not having fur." Marid thought for a few minutes, pacing all the while. She looked at Cal.

"You know this means my theory is correct. The Elders aren't going to like it, and may try something drastic."

"I've always said this nonsense about all of us 'morphs' having a base human DNA structure would get us into trouble. Now look at you!"

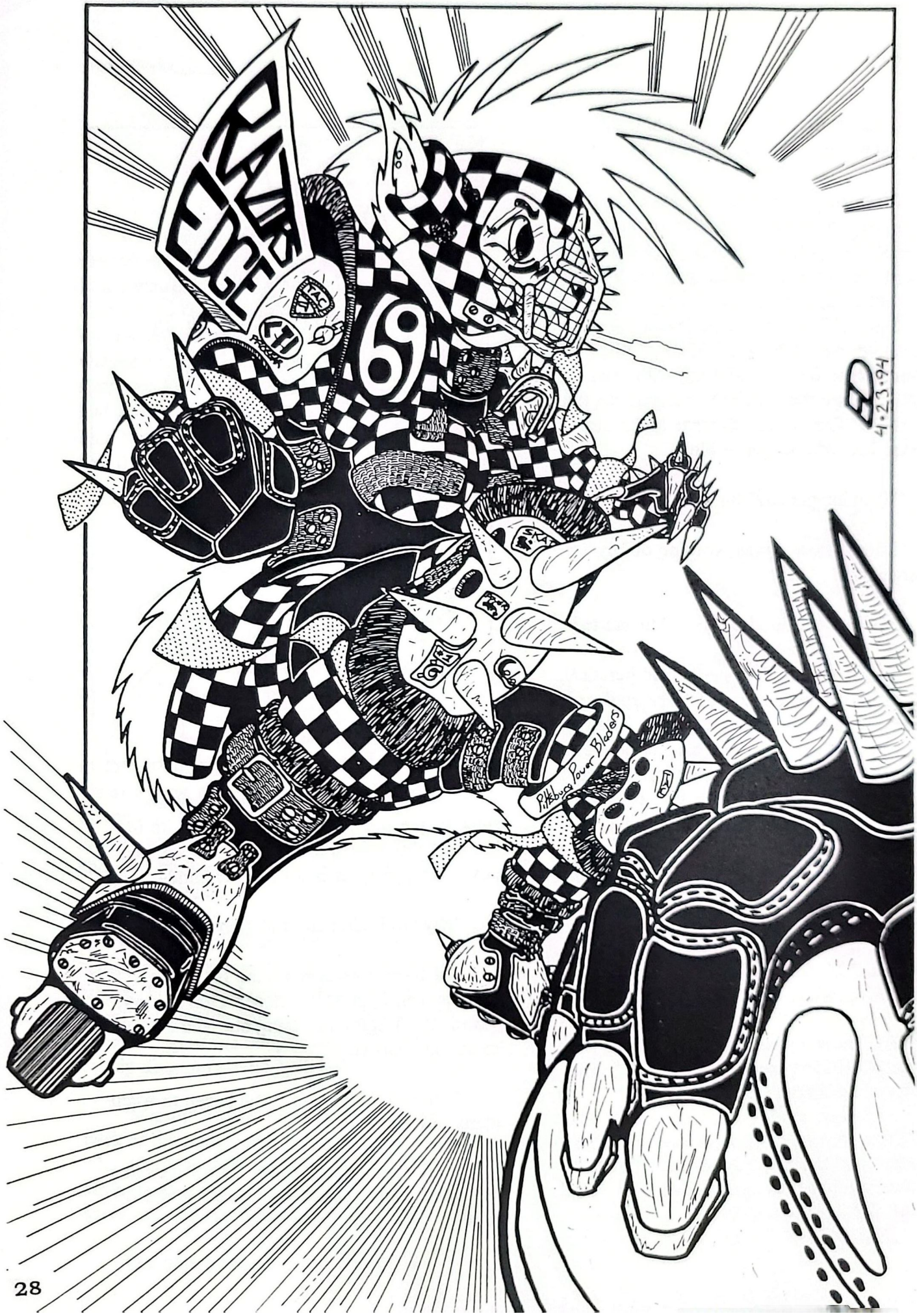
"Watch it buster! I'm human now, and since you're still a mouse, I'll hit you with the broom!" She smiled briefly and then sat back down, dropping her head into her hands. "My

"My God. Human of all things!"

Cal slipped his arm around his wife's shoulders and pulled her close. "Don't worry, Marid. We'll figure this thing out, and I won't let anyone hurt you!"

"Oh, Cal, I love you." She began to weep again, quietly.

"I love you, too, Marid." They stayed like that, mouse and human, for the rest of the night.


RAVEN EDGE
69
4.23.94
Rikbuss Power Blades

1992

Rules of Enragement

Patience Dakuna truly lived up to his name. For three hours, the raccoon had been squatting in a hidden ravine, just off the main path from Elidath. It was uncomfortably hot, especially in the leather armor he wore. None of this mattered to Patience; this was his job. Patience was a bounty hunter, one of the best. His fees could only be afforded by the noble set. And he was worth every farthing. Every assignment Patience had undertaken was completed to the satisfaction of his employers.

His current assignment was for a portly badger, a lesser noble of the house of Kaldon. Patience reviewed it in his mind as he held motionless in the brush. The noblefur, one Vaska De'lkaldon, was an older fur with a young and lovely wife. As with most older people, De'lkaldon thought that his wife, Ashoyka, was meeting with another fur for "liaisons". His vanity had made him send for Patience almost a full *tu'ann* ago. This was not typical of Patience's work, but apparently the noble considered a bounty hunter the best fur to eliminate his "competition". With a sizable gold advance in hand, the raccoon began his hunt, his quarry unknown.

\+ + + + +

Following a noble's wife, especially in a crowded town like Elidath, was no easy task. It took Patience almost four days just to establish a general pattern to Ashoka's movements, since he couldn't let himself be observed to be following. Another *tu'kaa* had passed before he detected a pattern. After that, things were simple.

Every third day, Lady Ashoyka's carriage stopped at a particular dress and milliner's shop. Veiled and cloaked, as was proper, she went in, stayed a short period, then remounted her carriage and went on her way. A moment later, another carriage would pull out from behind the shop headed in the other direction. Even the most inexperienced bounty hunter could have seen what was happening. The lady simply switched at the shop, to be picked up later at a pre-arranged point. Veiled and cloaked as she was no one would be the wiser in most cases. Patience was not one of those cases

Patience trailed the other carriage, following it to a country manor estate, the home of a handsome young rake of a vulpine. Noblefox Bolusan was so popular in the gossip of the town. No wonder the Lady Ashoyka was so very discreet. The raccoon almost burst out laughing, most uncharacteristically. This was almost too easy, one of the most uncomplicated jobs he'd ever undertaken. Another two *tu'kaa* to establish a pattern on Bolusan, and he'd be done.

\+ + + + +

Discreet inquiries, casual money exchanges, and a helping paw from a furious Baronet De'lkaldon led Patience down the right trails toward his quarry. It seemed that Noblefur Bolusan was a creature of habits. Aside from his every three days with the wife of his employer, the fox was a card-player, gambling all night every *Shen'ta*. He typically left his favorite at nine to twelve o'clock the next morning. "Like clockwork" his informants told him. And he always took the same route back to the manor house. That would be his downfall, in Patience's mind. Predictability was always the bounty hunter' friend.

Patience got the timing of the noble's visits down over the next *tu'kaa*, with the help of some well paid informers. The Baronet was very liberal with his gold, aiding him in everything he asked for. All led up to this, the raccoon crouching in a bug infested thicket, carefully scouted out before hand, waiting for the fox Bolusan to pass this way.

Bolusan had great confidence in his skill; he always traveled without retinue when going off to play cards. Patience knew it would take very little to take down the cocky young punk.

He had armed himself accordingly. At his side was a double heavy crossbow, as powerful as he could pull. Patience also wore his customary *pistollero*, the small hand crossbow favored by the raccoons. His short sword, twin daggers, and brace of throwing darts completed the collection. He felt that he would be more than a match for the young noble, but was also cautious, as was his nature. Just in case the noble had it in mind to bolt, Patience had a set of horse *thulusa* wrapped around his waist. Four swinging balls on thongs of strong hide, they would wrap up any horses legs, sending it to the ground. The raccoon was always hesitant to use them; after all, it wasn't the horse he was contracted to hunt. Nonetheless, if necessary, they were ready.

Time dragged on as Patience reviewed the capture in his mind. It was simple enough: the Noblefur would ride this way, heading home. Patience would reveal himself as the fox approached to within a hundred yards, his effective crossbow limit. Patience would inform him of the contract, and watch the victim. If he bolted, Patience would bring down the horse, and then the rider. If Bolusan surrendered, he would simply march him back to the Baronet, If he wanted to fight, Patience would drop him where he sat. Such were the options. Patience waited, resisting the urge to scratch.

As the sun hit its zenith, Patience waiting paid off. He saw the gaudy clothing of the young noblefur weave into sight atop the golden stallion he favored. Patience resisted the urge to tense. It made an uncomfortable rush of adrenaline if he did. It would take a few moments for the fox and his mount to be within bolt range. Then, two minutes until he was within no-miss range. Patience leveled his crossbow and waited.

As always, his predictions were accurate. Bolusan was alone, and rather deep in his cups. A popular nickname for intoxication was 'getting foxed', and the noble had done just that. His head hung down, muzzle half buried in the folds and ruffles of his shirt, while quiet snores reached the bounty hunter's sensitive ears. Patience was kind; he waited until the fox was within an easy distance before waking him.

"Noblefur Bolusan! Awaken and hearken!!" he shouted, standing mostly concealed in the brush around him. The fox looked up, bleary eyed from lack of sleep and alcohol.

"Who calls me and awakens me from such a dream of vixens? After a night of losing, I am not in a tolerant mood."

Patience stepped forth, allowing his prey to get a good look at him. "I have, good sir." The raccoon leveled his weapon at the fox. "I am Patience Dakuna, a professional finder. Your presence has been requested by Vaska De'lkaldon for dallying with his wife. Will you accompany me quietly, or need I enforce his desire?" The way Patience held the crossbow indicated that either way was going to cause trouble.

"I can hardly argue with such a request, good bounty hunter," the fox said. "But I am afraid I must." Bolusan made a gesture, and the vines wrapped around Patience's ankles. The noblefur continued, "For I am also employed by the good Vaska, for the purpose of bringing your death!!"

Patience let fly with both crossbow bolts as the fox brought up his paws. A sparkling shield of mystic energy emerged, just in time to intercept the messengers of death the raccoon had flung. "Damn!!" Patience yelled to himself as he tore his boots free of the clinging vines. "An ambush, with a professional mage yet!" He ran over his options in his mind, quickly as the mage-fox prepared another spell. The raccoon

dropped into the bushes as Bolusan raised his hands.

"Don't you even want to know why you are going to die, *noble* bounty-hunter?" The sarcasm in his former target's voice was clearly evident to Patience. He hesitated, scanning for an opportunity.

"You brought a badger to *justice* at the end of a rope about an *ann* ago, remember?" Patience remembered, alright. The young badger was pronounced guilty of rape and murder. The raccoon had to kill him in defense of himself; the town wanted him dead, and would have killed Patience to get him. The only logical choice was made and executed (along with the badger).

"What does this badger to do with you, Bolusan?" Patience was edging slowly backward, heading for a small hole in the bushes.

"Everything, my valiant sneak-thief. That badger was the cousin of my Lord Vaska, and much beloved by him. He'd have gladly paid off the victim's family, but you had already killed his cousin!" The fox peered intently at the bushes, spell still held ready. "For almost an *ann*, he has been planning, studying, preparing. Now you DIE!"

With that, the fox-mage brought his arm down, leveling a mystic bolt at the glade. That was the break Patience had been waiting for. As the ball of power burst around him, the raccoon ducked through the hole in the bushes, moving as fast as he could through the scratching, clinging plants. He could hear the crackling of the flames behind him as the brush burned. Patience did not look back.

"Dakuna, you bastard!! I'll chase you to the end of the world if I have to!!" Patience heard behind him as he ran. The raccoon began discarding equipment to move faster. He kept his bow, short sword, blades, and precious little else. Fleeing swiftly seemed like the only logical course; he knew that one on one with a magister usually ended up with an angry mage and a dead bounty-hunter.

+ + + + +

The first clue Patience had about the mage's companions was the arrow that flew by his head. A quick glance showed several assorted furs after him, including a ferret wearing the badge of a bounty hunter. "Damn!!" the raccoon swore again. He knew of a typical mage's ego and overconfidence; he'd hoped that Bolusan had challenged him alone. That hope dashed, Patience realized that this was very likely the last bounty he'd ever try and collect.

"Not hardly!" he swore to himself. Dakuna had been in tight places before. He'd won then and he'd win now, as long as he didn't give up. Patience was the best; now was his chance to prove it!

The first thing to do was to lose the idiots behind him. The only one that really worried Patience was the ferret. He was a professional. The others were just thugs. A quick trip left and right, and a dash down into a ravine made the raccoon seem to disappear from sight. He dropped to the ground, hushing his gasping breath with his paws. Patience tried to call the map of the area out of his troubled memory, to see if there was a way to elude them permanently.

His trick worked briefly. Several of the fox's accomplices passed him by. The ferret was not one of them. Patience thought about the lay of the land. He knew that if he stayed still and in one place, some bright fur would get the idea of splitting up and quartering the ground to find him. The raccoon seemed to recall a series of ravines and small watercourses just to the north of him, about a *dekk*. If he could reach them, he'd have a fighting chance of escape.

With a last glance and listen, Patience slipped off through the bushes, as quiet as a church mouse. He could hear the others off to the east, following god-knows-what. A brief sigh of relief escaped his muzzle; he had enough to worry about without having those clumsy oafs chasing him around these woods. His footsteps were almost silent as he paced on, heading relentlessly to the north. His sides ached, the sweat soaked through his fur and armor, but Patience knew that any hesitation would result in something extremely unpleasant, like death.

Eternity passed, as Patience made his way closer and closer to the escape he so desperately desired. He reached the foothills in less than an *decai*, a miracle for someone of Dakuna's bulk. A clear path lay up the hill side, heading for a small river over the hillock. Something tingled in Patience's mind. "It all seems too easy....."

The whistle of the descending blade was all the warning Patience got. As he turned, unsheathing his own sword, the raccoon was struck along the shoulder, biting through the leather armor that he wore. He whirled, knowing exactly who his opponent had to be. Patience had guessed correctly; the ferret bounty-hunter. His opposition was alone, holding a glowing blade. "Some sort of ensorcellment, probably to reduce armor from the way he hit me," the raccoon thought as he lashed out with his own blade.

The ferret leaped back at the speed of the strike. "So, Dakuna, you stoop to using magery too, eh?" Patience just smiled, a teeth baring grimace that among raccoons was the death-sign. His sword had saved him on more than one occasion; it was light as a feather and quick as an adder thanks to enchantments he'd received in lieu of payment from an old sorcerer. With renewed ferocity, he attacked the ferret, knowing one or the other was to die this day.

Back and forth the battle raged, the *centa* stretching into *decca* as both strove to the final conclusion, the death of their opponent. The strikes were fast and furious, both combatant puffing and wheezing as they put their whole beings into it.

The ferret gave up. He opened himself with a furious onslaught, slashing Patience several times before the raccoon managed to slip inside and thrust into the side of his chest. The ferret expired with a bubbly sigh as the exhausted Patience slid his sword free.

"Bravo, little raccoon!!" Patience whirled to see Bolusan, the fox-mage behind him . "I hope you are not too tired for what comes next!" The fox raised his arms for casting....

Patience played his last card. He whipped his arm up, launching a specially prepared dagger from its' hidden holster. It struck the fox on the cheek, a glancing blow. But it was enough to give Patience his escape.

The raccoon dashed like mad up the hillside. "If I can reach the river, the magic cannot follow!!" he thought, remembering the little he knew about magery. Magic could not travel over water. His getaway would be clean.

He crested the hill as he heard hoof beats behind him. Patience realized that his memory had not been entirely accurate. A gorge of perhaps forty meters in width, and twice that in depth lay before him. He spotted a dangling vine growing off the trees hanging over the gorge. If he could reach it, it just might be enough to get him over the top.

Patience took a deep breath. His nerves tensed and steeled for the jump, he waited until he heard Bolusan crest the hill. He turned his head and yelled, "Good bye my lord! You lose!!" The raccoon coiled up his legs and jumped for the vine.....

"Okay what was your roll, Josh?"

"Darn! A thirty!! What happens?"

"Looks like Patience missed the vine. Sorry."

The teenage boy looked down at his paper. "There's nothing I can do to save Patience, Uncle Brian?"

"I'm sorry, Josh. According to the FURIS rulebook, if you critically fail your saving throw on something like that, the worst thing possible happens." The older gent behind the Game Master shield shuffled through some papers and rules. "Looks like Patience bought it, pal!"

"Darn, he was one of my favorites, too." Josh folded up the record sheet that was Patience Dakuna. "Now what?"

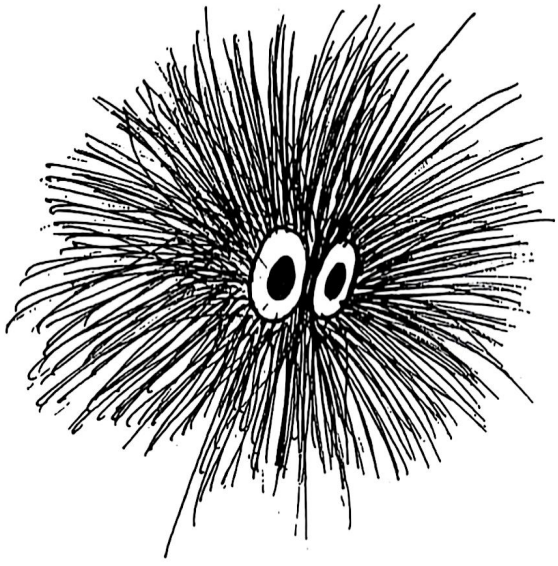
+ + + + +

Kyriana, the mage rolled over in the fresh light of the dawn. The tawny tigress had a good feeling about today. "Today is a day for adventure!!" she whispered to no one in particular.

The door burst open startling Kyriana into full wakefulness. Her mole servant, Merthon stood in the doorway. "Mistress, gentlemen have come to call. They are in need of your magical services and say they can pay highly if you accompany them."

Kyriana smiled again. Yes, it was a good day for an adventure.....

(to be continued????.....)



"A BAD FUR DAY
or
FUR-RAZZLED!"

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E'LANTII°
LOST IN A DAYDREAM
Fox '94

LOG OF THE WANDERING STAR

Part 1

By Brian Miller

Prelude:

The Colonel sat in his darkened office, vidscreen alive with still frames. His aide, Danseu Vann, sat silently at his right, awaiting any request. It had been some hours now, but Danseu Vann was a man accustomed to waiting for his boss. When the Colonel was intent on a project, time ceased to have any meaning for him.

Abruptly, the Colonel spoke. "Are you sure these are the most qualified, the very best team you could put together?" His voice was low, controlled. Almost artificial.

"Yes, sir. These have been selected out by human and computer from a list of roughly forty-six hundred applicants for space duty."

"Do they know what the mission is?"

"No, sir. We thought it best if they were briefed after the final crew decision, and that they be briefed that it was a Delta-Star-Delta explorer ship that they were rescuing."

The Colonel flicked off the vid tiredly, plunging the room into utter darkness. "Perhaps that's for the best. If the artifact that ship held falls into the hands of the Crus-ZZxa Enclave..." The threat hanging in the air was almost a physical pressure. "Very well. Throw them all together and see if they can function as a team."

Danseu Vann rose to leave. "Don't fail me, Dans. It's too important this time."

Log of the Wandering Star 1: Jeromy's Eyes

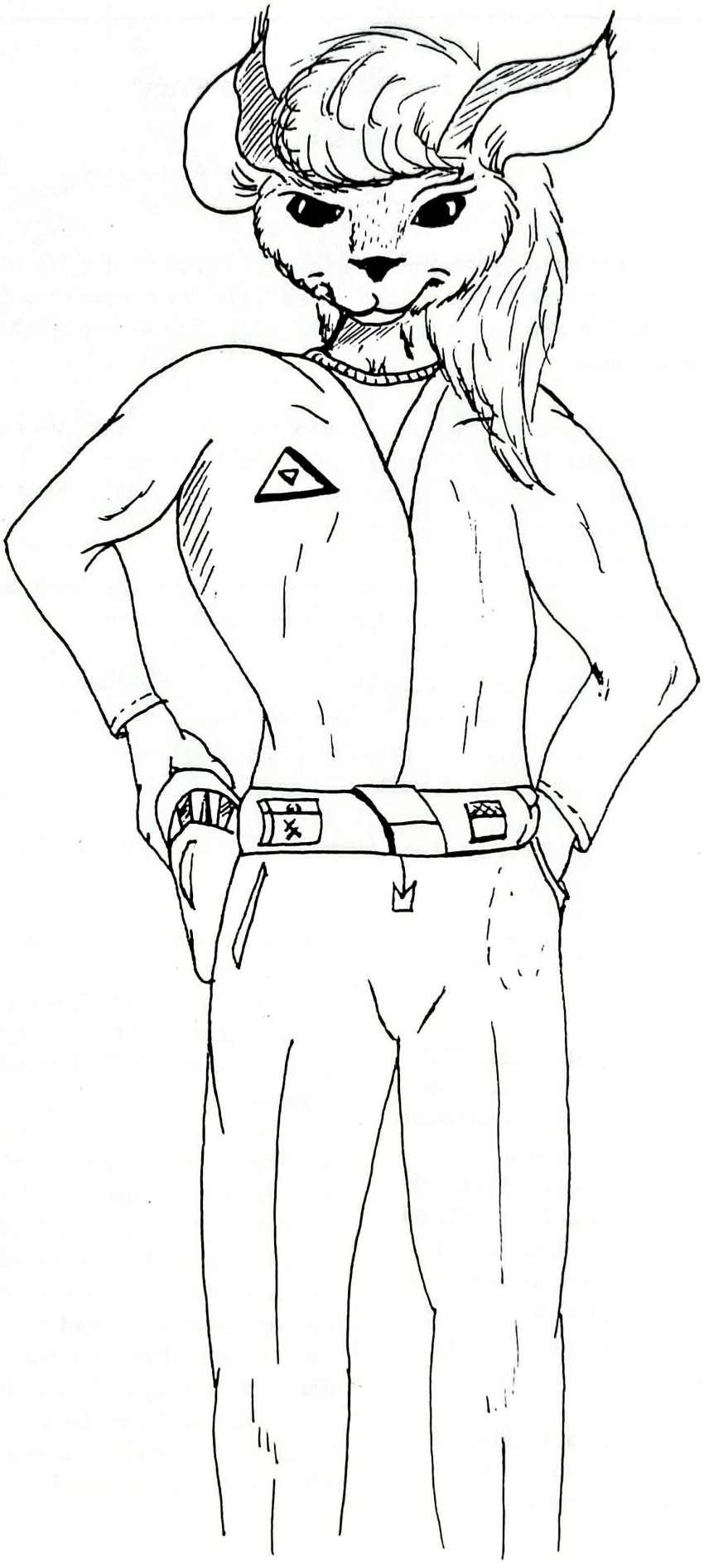
Even as I stood in front of the Delta-Star-Delta building, I couldn't believe my good luck. The largest interalliance trading and exploration company was hiring me! Here I was, a seventeen-*ann*-old Ceiti, just out of school and newly arrived on Acropolis. I was being offered a crew position with the DSD Corporation. I was so excited when I heard, I telecommed Mother on Cygnus VI (a fortune, but worth it to tell her in person). She was happy, but her usual cautious Ceiti self. Same old Moma!

I entered the huge front door, looking all around me without a clue as to what to do or where to go. I guess I was gawking like a tourist, because a being in uniform, a Marrun, approached.

"Help you, son?" Even friendly, Marruns were frightening. Over two meters tall, all cat teeth and claws. A Ceiti would be no more than a snack.

"Uh, I, ... uh," I managed to articulate as I fumbled in my pouch, pulling out the vel with my hiring notice on it. "Here, I, uh..... received this!" I managed to stutter out. He took it from my hand, hopefully not noticing my trembling. My ears swiveled back and forth uncontrollably as he read it, and I felt like I was going to commit that ultimate breach of decorum, fainting in front of another species.

"Okay, sir." the Marrun told me. "Follow the glowing green light. It will lead you to where your appointment is."



Jeromy
(Caiti Male)
Comm Officer
Trader Ship
"WANDERING STAR"
(Delta Delta Grp)
↑
STAR

A small green ball appeared in front of me, and bobbled. I looked at it, thinking of salvation, and then up at the Marrun

"Uh, th - thank yyyou!" Before it could get out of my sight, I darted after the firefly light. It led me through all kinds of halls and offices, doors and el shafts.

My twinkling guide stopped in front of a desk where a female Elvaxx sat working at a term. I stood silent, the very epitome of Ceiti politeness. Out of the corner of my eye, I studied the Elvaxx. An avian race by nature, they were quite adept at using their wings as flexible hands. She seemed to have no trouble at all using a multiracial term.

Minutes crept by. I don't even think she realized I was there. "Umph, excuse me," I said, a breach of Ceiti decorum. I wasn't too upset; after all, no one else was around. The Elvaxx turned in my direction.

"Apologies mine, gentle. To not see well to the side a difficulty. To excuse. Offer help, mine to you?" I hardly understood her even though she was speaking Intran, because of the strange inflection their people spoke with.

"The guard at the door told me to follow the light, so I followed it here, and I believe this is where I am supposed to be." I couldn't believe I jabbered so fast. My nerves. When I get scared or upset I sound like a waterfall.

She touched her term with a wingtip. "Are expecting, gentle. Are Ceiti termed Jeromy in communications specialized?"

"Yes, I'm Jeromy, race Ceiti. Specialty comm." Jeromy wasn't my true Ceiti name; most beings couldn't pronounce our name, so for convenience we adopt an easier name.

"To enter door, gentle. Most gracious day." She pressed a button and the door next to her desk slid away. I walked in. hopefully ready for whatever awaited me.

+ + + + + + + + + + + + + +

A conference room, with an assortment of species gathered. I'd thought that most of the crew would be Human, but this was a real mixed bag including (to my shock and horror), two Marruns. I took a seat quickly, near the door, trying hard to not be noticed. It almost worked. Only the smaller Marrun looked at me. I shrunk down in my seat, my ears folding back along my head. He frightened me.

I was saved by the opening of a door at the front of the room. A tall Human wearing the DSD emblem on his jacket walked in. His dark eyes surveyed us from under bushy brows. It felt like he was staring at our souls. He sat down behind a desk in the front of the room.

"Greetings. My name is Danseu Vann. I represent the Exploration division of Delta Star Delta, and am the one who made the final decision on your employ." He refreshed himself from a cup on the desk. "I will be brief. You are the full crew of our latest expedition, which, even though it falls to our division, is not a routine exploration." Vann consulted his terminal. "You will be trained on ship operations for only one *kia* before departure on the particulars of the craft."

"Your first mission is in the datapacks in front of you. A search and rescue or recover." The top of the table slid back in front of me. I took it and slipped it into my vest, continuing to watch Vann. He was making notes on a PADD.

"In order to facilitate operations, we have selected you according to your files, our investigations, and interviews. In turn, so that your comrades will get to know you, I shall introduce each, and give a brief synopsis of your position and experience."

"Your ship's commander is Captain Kurr'lt of Marrus 3." One of the Marruns, the shorter one that had been watching me, stood. He looked like a dark furred cat, strong muscled, with a blaster strapped on his hips. Vann continued, "He is a three time ship commander, on small scale explorers and is a registered pilot/astrographer." Impressive credentials.

The only Elvaxx in the room stood next. A meter-five bird like creature with webbed wings. "This is Kushnar of Elvaxx, chief astrographer. He has over forty standard-*ann* experience in celestial astrography. " The bird nodded its' head with its' thick stubby neck. He said, "Acquaintance yours mine to make gladly." Yazh, was it going to be hard to talk to him in the dining salon, even for a communication specialist.

"Your engineer, Tourmaline of La'han." Even I'd heard of the La'hanni on my backwater world. These anthroskunks were natural born wizards at machinery. They could build and repair things that no other race could even understand. Vann checked his PADD. "She comes to us from AlphaSphere Dynamics, where she single handedly saved a crippled starliner." She stood up, and the room gave an almost audible gasp. Around her waist, extending down to enclose her legs and feet was a powered exoskeleton framework. That and a very (and I mean very!) small halter over her rather large chest was all that she wore. That reinforced what else I'd always heard about their race: they were like sex-crazed does, sexing anyone. She spoke, making me realize I had been staring, most rudely. "As you can see, my heroism is not without its penalties." Her servos whined slightly as she sat back down. I wonder why, in this day of easy medical treatment, that she didn't get that fixed, rather than wear an exo?

My attention was again drawn to the Human representative, Danseu Vann. "Your medical officer is R. J. Joliff. Practiced combat surgeon and emergency rescue, both surface and vacuum qualified." Our one human, darkish wavy hair, almost as massive as a Marrun. His shoulder patch bore the Silver Caduceus, the Combat Medicine insignia. Only the best wore it. "Call me John," he rumbled in an extremely low pitch voice. Scary guy for a medic. Hands that big wielding a beam scalpel? Vann continued, "In addition, your ship will be equipped with two automedics. You may require them on this mission." Very encouraging, that.

Vann gestured to what I thought was the other Human in the room, hidden in the shadows. As the being came into the light, I could see that I was wrong. It was spindly, with huge black eyes. I just couldn't place his world of origin. "This is Groop, of Peresis." A Perekian!! I thought they were a myth! "He is your ground ops and reconnaissance being."

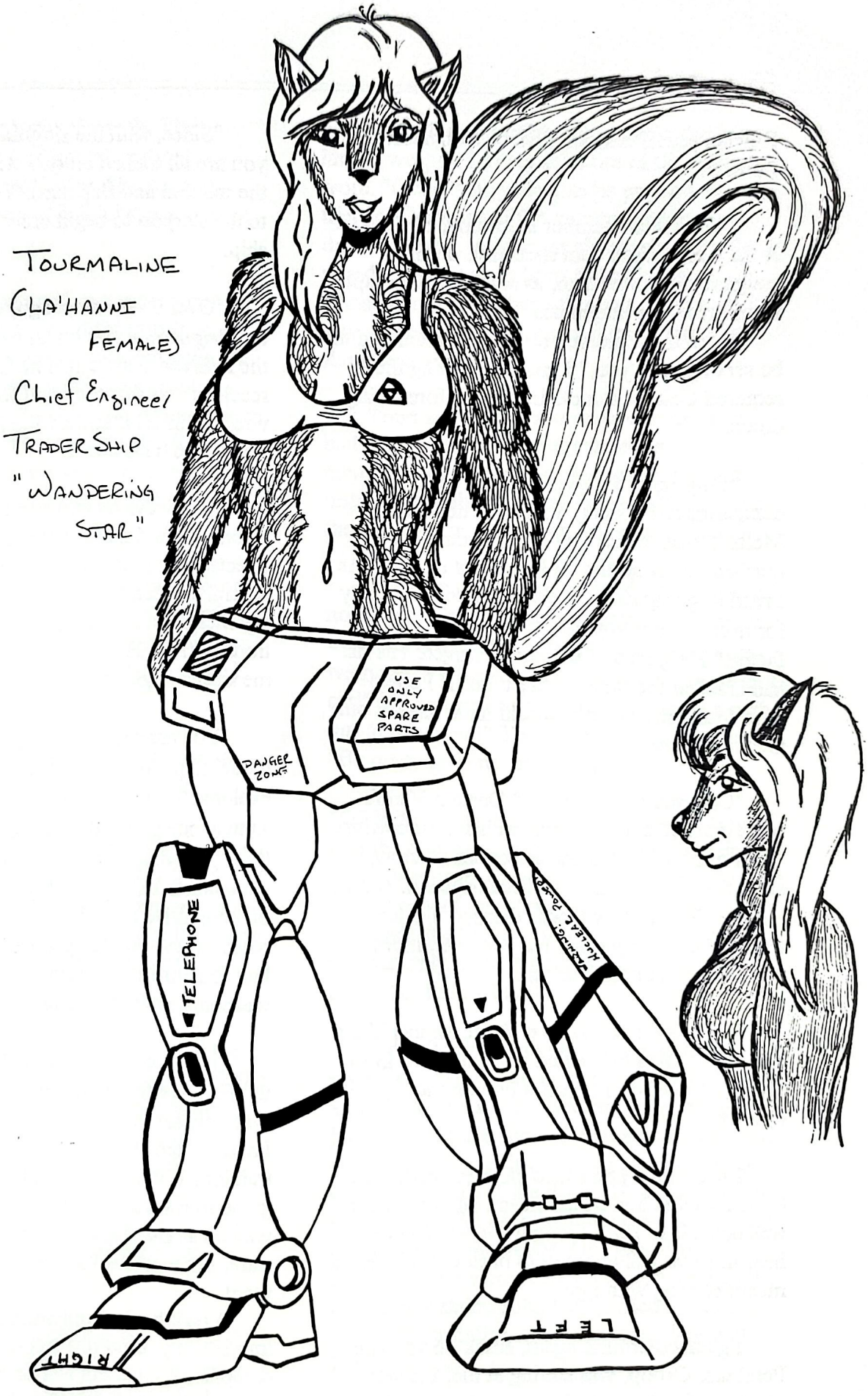
"Hoya, everyone!" His voice had an odd tone, like a suffused excitement. He was staring at all of us most unabashedly, like we were the most fascinating thing he'd ever seen. I probably looked the same, staring at the Marruns.

Vann continued, "Groop is an experienced ground guide and quite xenofriendly in comparison to his people." Groop smiled at us, a ghastly expression like something had died.

"Piloting the shuttlecraft, as well as ground safety, falls to Mellar'lt, the commander's sword-brother." The other Marrun stood up. He was huge! I shrank down in my seat, trying my best not to be scared (and succeeding very little).

"I'm the guy with all the firepower. Stay behind me, and you'll all be fine!" he snarled, his muzzle a combination growl and grin. It was going to be tough getting used to him, but I wasn't about to let me nerves force me out of the best deal I'd ever been offered.

"Cargo, supplies, and purser duties are assigned to α279-14Δ, late of Rilik V. It is its duty to make sure that you have all that you require before lift." Rilikian, one of the three known insectoid races, similar to a Ceitin *kathass* or a Terran mantis. It looked at us, no expression readable on its face. "To all greetings. It has your best interests in its mind." Not another bizarre speech pattern. Now I saw why they wanted a Com tech; I'd be using all my time moderating conversations between the


TOURMALINE
CLA'HANNI
FEMALE)
Chief Engineer
TRADER SHIP
"WANDERING
STAR"
USE ONLY APPROVED SPARE PARTS
DANGER ZONE
TELEPHONE
WARNING HIGH VOLTAGE
RIGHT
LEFT

Rilikian purser and the Elvaxx astrogator! *Ta'shai*!!

"Your final member is Jeromy, of Ceiti IX. A fully accredited com specialist, on first assignment." I stood up, as some gasps escaped from my future shipmates.

"I am most pleased to be aquatinted and to be serving with you," I gushed, waiting the required Ceiti politeness interval before sitting down.

"Why have we been saddled with inexperienced officer, Vann!!" The Marrun Mellar'lt was on his feet in an instant. His fist crashed down on the table in front of him. "As I read it, going to need everyone combat ready for mission, but youngster is not a proven factor!" He glared at me and I cringed. His fist had cracked the table where it hit. If I could have found my voice, I would have backed out then and there.

"Commander Mellar'lt!" Danseu Vann's voice cracked across the room like a forcewhip. "I am responsible for the selections of crew, and ***I*** the one who has the final decision. *Is that clear*?" The last few words dripped like ice from the company man. He was even more frightening than the Marrun.

Mellar'lt turned to face Vann, almost like a challenge. Then he ruffled himself down in to his seat. "Yes, sir. I'm just a hired hand, *viashka.*"

I watched Vann's face closely; apparently he knew what that insult meant. My own heart was beating so fast I thought everyone could hear it. I was still tempted to back out, if staying meant serving with <u>him</u>.

I glanced around again, slunk down. The Perekian, Groop, was staring at me, the very essence of rudeness! If we were back on Ceitis I'd have told him a thing or two! He almost distracted me from hearing what Danseu Vann continued with.

"Since, with the singular exception of com, you are all trained crew, I will be very brief on the mission and ship stats. You will be released to the starport to begin crew training on your ship.

"Over three *keaea* ago, one of our ships, the *Bright Star* was on an exploration survey of the Pela'dasan system. The final report we received was that they had found a ship wrecked in orbit around the star system. That was all we have heard.

"The previous two crews that we assembled had major psychconflict. I personally selected you to avoid this, from a pool of several thousand applicants. There is no significant psycho patterns that would indicate trouble. (Hai! He didn't see that Mellar'lt giving me sideways glances!)

"You are reasonably familiar with this model ship. An *"AESTI"* class, fifteen person explorer. You will be carrying one sublight shuttle, one gev runabout for ground work, and three parawings, as well as the normal explorer compliment of gear. Drive is by a combination of Jump drive and Warp drive, enabling you to reach the system in approximately twelve and a half *kea*. Artificial gravity to 11G, and weaponry systems are also installed."

He looked up from his PADD. "That is it, in brief. Are there any questions?" The entire assembly sat in silence for a moment. Then the La'hanni spoke. "When do we begin the training? If this is an S and R square, you're going to want immediate action." Her servos whined as she shifted position. I tried not to stare, but that was the *smallest* halter I'd ever seen!

'You'll begin familiarization training immediately, if no one has objections or complaints. Quarters will be here at DSD. We can move your personal items, or release you to do it yourself. Is this acceptable?"

A quiet murmur broke through. The Marruns were having a discussion about something. I had no difficulty. Since space flight was so expensive, I didn't have a lot with me at any one time.

"Very well. If you will accompany my assistant, she will take you to the outfitting unit." Vann stood up as the door slid open. A human woman wearing a DSD jumpsuit stepped in. "Arisel will guide you. From time to time before your departure I will check on your progress. Feel free to ask anyone for assistance. Your mission has been given the top priority." He gestured to her. "Good luck."

We all rose, filing out one by one, behind Arisel, the rep. I caught a quick glimpse of Vann as we left. A cold, calculating look was on his face. It sent a chill through me, why, I don't know.

Arisel kept up a running commentary as we went through level after level of the corporation headquarters. Most of my companions were like statues, the slight whine of Tourmaline's exo as we walked. All but Groop, the Perekian. He was staring around, occasionally touching passers-by like they were exhibits in a museum. strange creatures, my new shipmates.

A brief tunnel-gev ride awaited us at the bottom of the building. We were alone with the guide. I really felt alone. I knew that Mellar'lt was watching me, but I remembered my politeness and did not respond or even acknowledge it.

None of us were prepared for what happened at the end of the ride.

As the door slid open, a blaster bolt colt Arisel square in the chest, knocking her back into the car. Outside, I caught a brief glimpse of several chitinous creatures waving weapons. I dove to the floor, trying to get out of the way of others doing the same thing.

Mellar'lt stood right their, pulling the largest weapon I'd ever seen out of the pack he wore. "Clear!!" he yelled, as he pressed the trigger. The front of the gun erupted in a dazzling flame. A Marrun plasma-flamer! No wonder he told us to keep out of his way! Those things could burn through durrelium! I saw several of the creatures outside burst into flame and scatter.

Tourmaline, the least mobile of us, also had not moved. From her exo leg, a compartment popped open, revealing a slim pistol. She grabbed it, and fired, drilling one of the creatures in the center, knocking it over.

In all the confusion, I hoped no one would notice me. The Captain was trying to marshal everyone around the edges of the door. "Crus warriors! We have got to get out of this *vekk'at* car!" He gestured to Mellar'lt, "Clear us a path out of this mess!" To the rest of us, he yelled, "Be ready to move on my signal!"

With a deep breath, both Marruns jumped into the doorway, screaming curses in their native language. Captain Kurr'lt had produced a blaster pistol from somewhere and fired alongside the flamer. As the noise died down momentarily, Kurr'lt hollered, "Now, out of the car to the left!! Move!!"

I didn't think I could. I was scared out of my wits. a huge hand grabbed me. "C'mon, kid!" John, the medic, hauled me up by my jumpsuit. "I think the old man wants us to haul ass!" A rather succinct way of putting it as he dragged me out of the door. All around, I could see the crab like creatures that the Captain had called Crus. Ugly things. Groop and the Rilikian insect were working on the door to the emergency stairs. John half carried me as we passed Tourmaline, who was struggling with her lower exo.

The Captain and his sword brother took a quick glance to see if we were moving. They both looked angry at our progress.

"Get a move on! It looks like more are coming!" The Elvaxx began struggling with the exo as well, trying desperately to get Tourmaline moving.

John dropped me unceremoniously next to Groop. "Stay put!" he leaped over to where the engineer and astrogator were trying to work. "Clear!" he yelled, before raising his hand and striking the framework. It fell apart, causing Tourmaline to drop to the ground. "Works every time!"

"Damn it, human! How am I supposed to get out now? Levitate?" the La'hanni was very upset. She was correct; without the exo, she would be stranded here.

"Don't worry, sweetheart! Let old John take care of that!" The medic looked up for a moment, checking the progress that Groop was having with the door. Delta, the insectoid, had the controls in its hand. "Evacuate. Door accessed. This being hold for you."

That's what we were all waiting for. If we could get out of this building, perhaps we could attract help. I bolted past them, up the stairs. Behind me, I could hear, "What the he....." and the sounds of heavy, pounding feet. John flashed past me, the engineer over his shoulder. Apparently, her halter had a matching bottom, as this was all I saw of her, except her large, flowing tail. Groop and Allaree were bringing up the rear.

"Hey, what about the Captain?" somebody yelled. it took me a moment to realize it was me! I held, waiting until I saw them enter the stairs, roughly pushing Delta ahead of them. together, we bolted up the stairs.

As we ran, I could hear the sounds of pursuit. The Crus were relentless, and I wondered what the heck we had done to cause this. I mean, here I was, a new employee, and had no idea what the hell was going on! (Oops! I meant heck.)

The stairs seemed endless. In fact, they were. They ended in a grav shaft, leading to the roof. "Inside, people!!" Kurr'lt shouted, firing down the stairs with what looked like a small grenade launcher. (Where had they been keeping all this stuff?) John tossed Tourmaline in, and she disappeared on her way to the roof. The Elvaxx, Groop, and Delta quickly followed. My number was up. He grabbed me and heaved. I hit the grav chute and up I went.

A quick blur and we were on the roof. Within seconds, the Captain and Mellar'lt were there too, weapons still ready. A moment passed. Kurr'lt looked at the shaft. "Where the hell is Doc?" He stared at the telltales on the shaft controls. "He's still down there, surrounded! Damnit!!!"

Kurr'lt whirled around to the rest of us. "Find us a way of this *vess'kt* roof while I retrieve the good doctor. Roll it, people!!" The Captain never seemed to speak in less than a yell. I stood up and looked around. The roof looked as if it was a construction site. Dirt and rubbish were piled everywhere. The others, except Tourmaline, were up and looking for a way out. A quick glance over the side showed us to be much to far up to jump. A building was about a hundred meters across from us, but there was no syntherope or anything like that amongst the rubbish. It looked hopeless.

An alarm went off, over at the shaft. The Captain got heaved out the top, followed by John, the medic. He was grayish, the doctor was, and began heaving up the contents of his stomach. I turned away, a little nauseous from the display and fear, back to the problem at hand.

How could we get away from here? There seemed no exit. I saw the Captain gesturing to us. He knelt down next to the La'hanni, gathering all but Mellar'lt around him.

"Okay, team. Here's the situation."

"We have been cornered by an unknown size force of Crus soldiers, for reasons again unknown. There is no visible exit off this roof. We have no comm, very few weapons, and no means to signal help. We are in it all alone. Suggestions?"

Groop, eyes almost closed against the harshness of the sun. "There's a way to delay the shaft. I can do it, but I need a few *centa*."

"Good. Get on with it." The Captain pushed his hat back. "Anything else?"

I spoke. "Captain, there is another building right next to this. If we can get a way across, I'm sure that we could obtain assistance there."

The Elvaxx chimed in," Building abandoned, to ground could get though it, certainly." I hadn't noticed that it wasn't in use. Even so, it was a way to escape.

Tourmaline grabbed my leg. "Hey, kid. Over by that heap of shards. Do you see that long, silver cylinder?"

"Yes, Engineer. What about it?" I had seen it, but since it wasn't long enough, I'd ignored it.

"Bring it here. If that's what I think it is, we are outta here!"

I ran and got the device. I had no idea what it was; it was scribed in *Kelska* a language I didn't speak. "Here, Engineer."

"Just Tourmaline. Alright!!" she heaved the cylinder up. "Formfoam!!"

The Captain turned around, "What is it?"

"Formfoam, Captain. An instant bridge and our ticket out of here!" She grabbed me, and stuffed the cylinder into my hands. Aim this end out over the edge and push this." She indicated a button.

I did as I was told. A spray of grey liquid burst from the end about the same time as I heard Mellar'lt scream, "Here they come!! get ready!!" The foam was amazing. As it hit the air, it hardened into a plank attached to the side of the building. Tourmaline yelled, "Delta, get him out on it. Steady him, the dispenser might kick as it empties."

The insectoid steadied me as I stepped onto the flimsy bridge. "It's holding!!" I hollered back. "Come on, let's go!" I continued spraying the bridge out as I felt it shake. John had again picked up Tourmaline, and the rest of the crew followed. We made our way across the bridge, dropping off the end onto the abandoned building. Last across was Mellar'lt, fighting a rear guard against the Crus all the way. When he was the last one on the bridge, he tossed the flamer to the Captain. "*Vyasss'kaa*!!" he shouted, dropping an explosive onto the bridge. The formfoam exploded in a bright light, dropping the Crus. Mellar'lt twisted in the air, and managed to barely grip the edge. I scrambled forward as did the rest; I didn't care what he thought, I thought, or anything else. He was in trouble and I helped. We wrestled him over the side.

Mellar'lt looked at me. "You did alright, cub. Maybe I misjudge, eh?" I blushed. Even friendly attention was more than I wanted from him.

The sound of the door of this roof caught our attention. I sprang backwards as the rest came up with their weapons. A single figure stepped through.

Danseu Vann!

"Well done, everyone. You pass with flying colors!" A test! It had all been a test!

He continued, "Come with me. I'll explain everything."

"It had better be damn good!" Mellar'lt muttered. For once, I was in complete agreement!

The Colonel studied them on the screen. "I believe you're right, Vann. I believe you are right!" He shut off the vid and waited for the first of many debriefs

(Continued in Issue #2!!).

NOT BY THE HAIR OF MY CHINNY-CHIN-CHIN!
!?!!
LIL'BIT
UNIVAC BACKUP POWER 5000S

Fox Bytes:

Some stops along the Information Superhighway

Hi ho, you computer nuts out there!! As a community service to the Furry world, we here at SilverFox have gathered together a list of Computer Bulletin Boards which are either specifically oriented toward anthropomorphics, or have a significant Furry content. Please note, however, that we claim no responsibility for your usage of these boards. There are a lot of nuts out there, so you're at your own risk. I'd like to thank Mark Freid,(the everlovin' Canus)s for his invaluable work in gathering together this board list. Additional thanks go out to Shadowfox BBS. for allowing me to filerape them so often. I appreciate you guys, and a free copy of the mag is comin' your way!!!

SilverFox!! :>

BOARD NAME:	PHONE:	BASED OUT OF:
The Tigers Den	1-714-530-2554	Orange County, Ca
Stormgate Aerie	1-310-822-6729	West Los Angeles County
Wandering Wolf	1-503-246-3684	Oregon
Changewinds	1-513-752-8431	SW Ohio (Cincinnati)
Super Deformed	1-404-333-8554	Georgia, Atlanta Area
Dragon's Cave	1-206-752-4160	Western Washington State
North STAR BBS	1-408-247-7827	Calif. Central Coast (San Jose)
Shadowfox	1-510-452-3551	Oakland, California
Clawmarks	1-510-452-0350	Oakland, California
NVARNG	1-702-887-7352	Nevada
The Trap Line	1-416-588-2964	Toronto Area, Canada
The Matrix	1-804-323-6635	Southern Virginia (Richmond)
The Mystic Order	1-804-495-0612	Southern Virginia (Richmond)
The Time Machine	1-804-599-6401	Southern Virginia (Richmond)
T.O.U.P. BBS	1-914-354-7499	S.E. New York (White Plains)
Fvrcvs Maximvs	1-215-483-4047	Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)
United Front	1-718-886-6797	New York City
NCC 4017	1-904-678-3503	Northern Florida
Gardens/Avalon	1-210-308-9579	Texas (San Antonio)
Naorhy Republic	1-210-670-0501	Texas (San Antonio)
Pentarou! Ent.	1-815-654-7956	Northern Illinois (Rockford)
Ragazine BBS	1-704-734-1453	Las Vegas, Nevada
Brass Cannon	1-602-639-1039	Arizona

If you know of any additions, subtraction's, or corrections for any of these listings, please drop us a line, and we'll be glad to make the change!!

HEY YOU!!!!

(SilverFox Publications Submission Policy)

Yes, you, that undiscovered writer, frustrated artist, toiling comic book worker! We've been looking for you!!

FurryPhile and Furrottica are Amateur Press Association magazines, which means we accept submissions from the general public, as long as they fit our rules as presented here:

1. All submissions ***MUST*** be your own work. Don't submit somebody else's stuff, or else we will turn you over to that artist/writer/etc for legal disposition. We like and encourage *individuality* here, not cheap copies!

2. All work for these magazines must contain an anthropomorphic slant or viewpoint. After all, we are geared up to be Furry here. This does not mean that the story has to be exclusivly anthropomorphic, but should have a significant content, as witnessed in this issue.

3. Any genre is acceptable: Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Cyberpunk, Military, Speculative fiction, Romance, Superhero, etc. The Editor reserves the right to select which magazine the submission is slated for.

4. Formnats:

a. Text stories: Please send them in disk format, if possible (we use Word for Windows 2, but any reasonable ASCII text processor will work), or typewritten. Hand written submissions will be considered, but will recieve a lower priority than the others due to the transfer time. We reserve the right to spell check and reformat for publication, but otherwise will not edit your submissions.

b. Artwork: Computer ready (GIF,PCX,BMP,or any reasonable format), or finished inks reductable to 7.5x10" for our printing purposes. Any subject is acceptable (except kitten molesting, which will NOT be accepted in any format!), but we will slate more "adult" pieces to Furrottica.

c. Comic Story: Again, reductable to 7.5x10", finished inks, Black and White only. Multipage and multi issue stories are certainly welcome.

Send all submissions, inquiries, and orders to:

SilverFox Publications
PO Box 5344
Biloxi, MS 39534-5344

where

"Reality is Simply a Matter of Your Point of View!!!"

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